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## THE OPIUM QUESTION

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J. F. SCHELTEMA, M.A.  
Edinburgh, Scotland

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In the relations between East and West, opium possesses more than an academic importance, far surpassing the literary value it represents in works like Cottle's *Reminiscences of Coleridge* or De Quincey's *Confessions and Suspiria de Profundis*. Slavery in those relations was not productive of worse misery and death, says Dr. Medhurst, an English physician, than the opium traffic which has paralyzed the noblest efforts to elevate primitive races to a higher standard of life. Alcohol and cholera are scourges not to be compared to opium, says a Dutch missionary.<sup>1</sup> Such statements might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, their common purport that opium is an unmitigated curse, corroborated on high medical authority. The moderate and even the minimum opium-eater is a slave to his stimulant as the moderate alcohol-drinker is not.<sup>2</sup>

Civilization, no unmixed blessing when impelled by that powerful spring of western action, cupidity, has brought down many evils upon the East: the spread of opium among them. The export of opium from British India alone, during the fifty years 1855-1904, amounted to 5,220 million rupees, or, on an average, more than 100 million rupees yearly. The total gain from Indian opium, i.e., the amount paid by China and Eastern Asia for that commodity, above its cost price, during the period 1773-1906, has been estimated at £436,000,000.<sup>3</sup> China and eastern Asia might make a wry face at the transaction; they had to pay and keep quiet. The legislation of the traffic in opium was not from choice, as Li Hung Chang observed, but because

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Zegers, quoting Dr. Borrinai in *Het Opium-Vraagstuk in Nederlandsch Indië*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Lancet*, quoted in *The Truth about Opium-Smoking*.

<sup>3</sup> Charles McMinn, *The Wealth and Progress of India*, paper read at a meeting of the East India Association, Caxton Hall, Westminster, December 1, 1908.

China saw herself constrained to submit to the adverse decision of arms.<sup>4</sup> *Nolens volens*, the Chinese were made to yield. With opium they got the opium vice, and all the ingenuity spent in proving that the supply had come in natural response to the demand could never disprove that the use of the drug had met with very little favor in the Chinese Empire before European trade instincts took the matter up. We know of an edict, issued by the Chinese government in 1729, which prohibits the use of opium and orders the closing of opium dens. Later prohibitive regulations are also on record, e. g., that of March 15, 1839, which reminds the people that their destiny, their life and death are intimately concerned in resisting the temptation thrown across their path by foreigners, who were soundly rated (proclamations of March 18 and 26 of the same year) for introducing opium and defrauding the Chinese out of their property and inflicting injury upon them.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding secret pressure, the Chinese government persisted in debarring opium except for medicinal purposes. That attitude would soon have to give way before open pressure.

The sending of opium from Bengal to China was first suggested by a Mr. Watson, in the year 1767, to a council of representatives of the East India Company, held at Calcutta.<sup>6</sup> Not the Chinese government alone, the whole Chinese people showed resistance when the idea was carried out, and the junks, in common speech called "scrambling dragons," which conveyed the obnoxious foreign article along the coast and up the rivers, met with a rather cold, if not hostile, reception. This opposition on the part of the populace, was but slowly overcome. Almost a century later, a mob in the province of Hunan, driving out a missionary, shouted: "You have burned our palace, you have killed our emperor, you sell poison to the people and now you

<sup>4</sup> Alfred S. Dyer, *The Great Plague of Asia*.

<sup>5</sup> James Peggs, late missionary at Cuttack, Orissa, *A Voice from India and China*, in four letters to the Rt. Hon. Lord John Russell, first lord of Her Majesty's Treasury. Extracts from Chinese state papers: "Earlier Prohibitive Regulations against Opium."

<sup>6</sup> N. Allen, M.D., *Essay on the Opium Trade*.

come to teach us virtue!"<sup>7</sup> How opium was eschewed, we learn from trustworthy evidence. Two witnesses may here suffice: Ten or fifteen years ago, no one dared smoke publicly, said Griffith John in his report of a trip to Ko'pu in 1859;<sup>8</sup> opium-smoking is a thing of comparatively recent date, said J. Sadler, speaking in Exeter Hall, March 15, 1882. But the claims of western trade were not to be resisted and if, about 1800, the yearly import of opium into China was under 300 tons, while there are no reliable data that the country itself at the time produced any opium at all, the total annual consumption in China, prior to the reforms of the past three years, was estimated at over 22,000 tons, of which 3,180 tons came from India.<sup>9</sup> When in 1840 the Chinese government, alarmed at the increasing import of opium in Canton, took measures to stop it, western trade interests had already established a habit from which to derive further claims. Those claims, unrecognized, led to the first opium war. And it became even necessary to wage a second opium war, Great Britain and France allied against China, to surmount the scruples of the Chinese government, forced at last to legalize the import of opium by an amplification of the Treaty of Tientsin.

It is pleasant to note that exactly this high-handed abuse of power, and the indignation it awoke, engendered a movement for the suppression of the poppy-culture and the opium-manufacture in both India and China. This movement took a definite shape in the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, with the Earl of Shaftesbury as its first president and Sir Joseph Pease as its first parliamentary leader. From 1874 until now, under the presidency of Sir Matthew Dodsworth, with Mr. Th. C. Taylor as parliamentary leader and Mr. J. C. Alexander as honorary secretary, the society has not ceased to oppose the opium evil. But then, if evils come swiftly on horseback, at

<sup>7</sup> *The Opium Trade between India and China in Some of Its Present Aspects*. Reprinted from the *Colonial Intelligencer* for December, 1869, and May, 1870.

<sup>8</sup> R. Wardlaw Thompson, *Griffith John, the Story of Fifty Years in China*.

<sup>9</sup> J. G. Alexander, *Letter to the Foreign Ministers of the Countries Participating in the Shanghai Opium Commission*.

the very best they can only be made to return slowly like snails. In the matter of opium, this is not China's fault. On September 20, 1906, the famous Anti-Opium Decree was promulgated. The Chinese throne, anxiously considering how the Chinese nation might be made strong and prosperous, and trying to introduce reforms, ordained: "Let the poison of foreign and native opium be done away with within the period of ten years . . . ." Article X of the proposals for carrying out this resolution provided for the prohibition of the import of foreign opium, in order to close the sources of supply. There's the rub:

The prohibition of the growth of opium and of its consumption is a measure of internal policy [continued the text of the proposals] which we are justified in taking without further consideration. But the question of foreign opium, which is imported from other countries, impinges on our foreign relations, and the imperial commands should therefore be sought to direct the Board of Foreign Affairs to make a satisfactory arrangement with the British minister with a view to effecting an annual decrease within the next few years of the import of foreign opium *pari passu* with the decrease of native opium, so that both may be absolutely prohibited by the expiry of the limit of ten years. Besides Indian opium, the drug is also imported from Persia, Annam, and the Dutch Indies in no small quantities. In the case of Treaty Powers, negotiations should similarly be entered into with their representatives in Peking to effect the prohibition of such import, while with non-Treaty Powers we can exercise our own prerogative in strictly forbidding the import.

The Chinese government had taken a step in the right direction, a step so resolute and of such enormous purport that, as the *Times* observed, the strongest of governments might have flinched from it. One of the first consequences meant a dislocation of Chinese finance: the total revenue derived from the drug, estimated at about £6,768,750 yearly,<sup>10</sup> was to be balanced by the development of income from other sources. But the Chinese government did *not* flinch, and several new edicts, following that of September 20, 1906, proved its being in dead earnest, so much so, indeed, that the Treaty Powers had to give way. On July 29, 1907, the Secretary of State for India, Mr. (now

<sup>10</sup> Marshall Broomhall, editorial secretary of the China Inland Mission, "The Present Position of the Anti-Opium Movement," in the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review and Oriental and Colonial Record*, January, 1909.

Viscount) Morley, stated, in reply to a question by Mr. H. J. Wilson, that, after consulting the government of India, His Majesty's government had informed the Chinese government: (1) that they accepted in principle the proposal that the import of Indian opium into China should be diminished by one-tenth annually, *pari passu* with an equal decrease in the production of the native drug, up to the year 1910, and would continue to reduce at the same rate the export in 1911 and subsequent years, on proof that China had carried out its share of the arrangement; (2) that they had no objection to a Chinese official being stationed at Calcutta, provided that he should have no powers of interference; (3) that they were prepared to assent to such an enhancement of the customs and *likin* duty on foreign opium as would make its taxation in China equivalent to the taxation actually levied on native opium, differences in relative value and quality being taken into consideration. Steps had been taken to reduce the area under poppy in Bengal, which in the five years preceding 1906-7 averaged 615,000 acres, and in 1907-8 was not to exceed 562,000 acres. In 1907 the number of chests of Bengal opium fixed for sale was originally 4,400 a month. This had been reduced to 4,000 a month and the number for 1908 had been fixed at 3,000 a month. Further reductions would be made in succeeding years if the proposed arrangement with the Chinese government became operative. A white paper stated later that the average export from India to China having been 51,000 chests during the five years 1901-5, the Indian government had undertaken to limit this by one-tenth, or 5,100 a year during the next three years, and to continue a similar reduction after that period, "if during these three years the Chinese government have duly carried out their arrangement for diminishing the production and consumption of opium in China." The Chinese government showed its good will by ordering the Ministry of Finance to issue a receipt in answer to a memorial from the *Chen-wuch'n* (Council of State Affairs), commending the complete cessation of poppy-cultivation within the period of two years throughout the Chinese Empire.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *North China Herald*, April 23, 1908.

That the Chinese government has always been earnest and sincere in resisting the introduction of opium, there can be no doubt; its laws prove this fact and such is the testimony of all disinterested foreigners residing in China.<sup>12</sup> That the Chinese government, opium having been introduced through foreign influence, is now earnest and sincere in its efforts to get rid of it, cannot be denied. A dispatch from the British Minister in China, forwarding a general report by Mr. Leech, councilor to the British Legation at Peking, respecting the opium question,<sup>13</sup> makes it clear in regard to the anti-opium regulations that, on the whole, officials showing sufficient force of character to uphold them are almost sure of support from the people, prompted as the latter are by the force of public opinion, a force formerly unknown in China and of recent growth, but which is well upheld by the native press, the incipient moral education, and the awakening of a national conscience. Sir Alexander Hosie, commercial attaché to the British Legation at Peking, wrote in a report on opium, issued in June, 1908: "It is doubtful whether any question has ever stirred the Chinese Empire so profoundly as that of opium-suppression; it affects all classes . . . and public opinion, backed by a young, but growing patriotism, is gradually but surely branding opium-smoking as an evil that must be eradicated." Dr. Morrison, correspondent of the *Times* at Peking, aptly used the expression "bad form," in describing the view of the educated Chinese toward opium. The anti-opium movement, inaugurated by the government, has become immensely popular and, to quote also a Chinaman writing on the subject, "is going on steadily."<sup>14</sup> The movement meets with marked success, and the results are obvious throughout the empire; I am very much struck with the real and widespread suppression of the growth of opium, says Mr. Montague Beauchamp.<sup>15</sup> I learned from two different localities that, at the appearance of the proclamation,

<sup>12</sup> N. Allen, M.D., *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Published in *White Book*, "China," No. 2, 1908.

<sup>14</sup> A Chinese Cambridge Man, "Social Transformation in China," in the *Contemporary Review*, December, 1908.

<sup>15</sup> In a letter to the *Times*, October 3, 1908.

cultivators had actually pulled up their poppy crop, says Dr. Connolly.<sup>16</sup> Of all the tokens of change and regeneration that China presents, by far the most affecting and momentous is her declaration of war on opium.<sup>17</sup> A member of the staff of the *Times*, who more recently visited the Far East, writes: "In the province of Shansi, one of the chief poppy-growing provinces of China . . . an official of the British Legation, sent specially to investigate the present position, was able to report the complete disappearance of the noxious plant." Mr. Leech again remarks that the considerable progress already made by the Chinese government in its attempt at the suppression of the opium habit, produces the impression that it will succeed in this formidable undertaking—if loyally backed by the Treaty Powers, we should like to add. Summing up: the Chinese government stands above reproach in design and execution, unless it be, perhaps, for excess of zeal; there are, e.g., the army orders, which make disregard of the new opium regulations a capital offense: as a matter of fact, both officers and common soldiers appear to have been beheaded for the sin of contumacy in their obstinately "hitting the pipe."

It was not only in China proper that the bad effects of the propagation of the opium habit made themselves grievously felt. Farther south, in Indo-China, the complaints became louder every day. A factor of demoralization and disorder on land, opium caused also disturbances on the high seas. The French officials expressed their conviction that it encouraged piracy, smuggling being a natural result of the operative methods of the opium farm.<sup>18</sup> In Malay lands, the opium habit, with depravity and misery in its train, made alarming progress. Everyone who has had any experience knows that, when the habit seizes the Malay, it will sweep through the community as fire through jungle grass.<sup>19</sup> The effect on Malays is decidedly worse

<sup>16</sup> Speaking at a conference in Ipoh, Salangor.

<sup>17</sup> Britannicus in the *North-American Review*, January, 1909.

<sup>18</sup> De Lanessan, *La colonisation française en Indo-Chine*.

<sup>19</sup> Rt. Rev. Charles H. Brent, bishop of the Philippine Islands, "American Democracy in the Orient," in the *North-American Review*, September, 1905.



than on the Chinese, because the Malay is naturally indolent, and the smoking of opium makes him more lazy and indolent than he would be otherwise.<sup>20</sup> Their natural indolence is considerably increased (by opium); they (the Malays) appear to decrease physically.<sup>21</sup> I look upon a Straits Malay who takes to opium in any form, as a lost man.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, the sale of opium is forbidden to the Malays in the Straits Settlements, as to the Burmese and certain other native tribes in Burma, though both in the Straits Settlements and in Burma the prohibition seems to be more or less evaded.<sup>23</sup> But, evaded or otherwise, no prohibition of the kind exists in the Dutch East Indies where, on the contrary, when the opium farm was replaced by the government *régie*, territories, previously closed, were opened to the drug, Holland, in her imperious demand for more revenue, reverting to the shortsighted policy of the Dutch East India Company, though now a subtler mode of procedure prevails in distributing the profits. The opium habit in the Dutch East Indies was, and continues to be, an article of western importation. Crawford<sup>24</sup> tells us that tobacco-smoking began in Java about the year 1601; if, therefore, the Javanese used opium before that date, deduces Baud,<sup>25</sup> they must not have smoked but eaten it, of which there is no record. We know, on the other hand, that the introduction of opium in ever-greater quantities, by the Dutch East India Company, was met with decrees of prohibition by the independent or semi-independent princes of Java and other islands: the Susuhunans of Surakarte, the sultans of Bantam, the rajas of Lombok, etc. The common people, under direct government control, with all their submission to authority, and whatever is sanctioned by authority, often showed their aversion to the drug in no less decided a manner; the history of the Praenger Regencies proves this,

<sup>20</sup> Swettenham, quoted by Joshua Rowntree in the *Imperial Drug Trade*.

<sup>21</sup> Clifford, quoted by Joshua Rowntree in the *Imperial Drug Trade*.

<sup>22</sup> O'Brien, quoted by Joshua Rowntree in the *Imperial Drug Trade*.

<sup>23</sup> J. G. Alexander, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> *History of the Indian Archipelago*.

<sup>25</sup> *Proeve van eene Geschiedenis van den Handel en het Verbruik van Opium in Nederlandsch Indië*.

and there have been instances in other parts of the island as well, of opium-smokers committing theft to be sent to jail, the one means of breaking with the habit left to them, and even that of problematic advantage—Dutch East Indian prisons are hardly opium-proof. This universal repugnance and the attitude of the native rulers compare favorably with the action of the Dutch government, whose recently established opium *régie*, supposed to do away with the scandals of the opium farm, has made opium-smoking easier for men and women in all conditions of life; 60 per cent. of the native non-commissioned officers in the Dutch colonial army are reputed to be opium-smokers, and considering that opium is used freely for recruiting purposes, it can be imagined to what a fearful extent the rank and file are addicted to the artificially fostered vice—the present drastic Chinese system, applied to the native battalions of the Dutch, would leave few heads on their respective shoulders.<sup>26</sup>

A second comparison with the action or non-action of the Dutch and other European governments is invited by the rigorous anti-opium policy of Japan. China's curse has been Japan's warning, and a warning heeded, says the report of the Philippine Committee.<sup>27</sup> Already when opening her ports to the commerce of the world, Japan had stipulated, like Korea, that the trade in opium should be entirely prohibited (cf. the relative article in her treaty of 1858 with Great Britain) except for medical requirements, and the prohibition has always been maintained under very severe penalties, which are rigorously enforced. Having taken possession of Formosa, the Japanese government immediately began to wage war on opium, though the revenue derived from it formed one-third of the whole income of the island. Interesting particulars are given by Dr. Yamaguchi in a German medical paper: addiction to the opium habit was treated as a disease to be cured medically, for which purpose hospitals were erected and a medical school founded, the 1,200 old-style

<sup>26</sup> For further particulars concerning the opium policy of the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies, see the writer's article in *The American Journal of Sociology*, July and September, 1907.

<sup>27</sup> Issued by the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Department, Washington, D.C., 1905.

Chinese practitioners being gradually replaced by scientifically trained Japanese physicians. Further details we find in other publications: the prohibition of opium was enforced by practicable ordinances, some of whose objects were, first, to place the opium commodity under government monopoly; second, to restrain non-smokers from acquiring the habit; third, to require the registration of all habitual smokers, who thereafter would be allowed to purchase the drug only upon presentation of a license, this in turn being shielded by legislative rule; fourth, to assist smokers in abandoning the habit; and, finally, to impress upon non-smokers the baneful influence on morals and all progress which infallibly attends the habit. The result surpassed the most sanguine expectations, and it may be fairly expected that within twenty years the new insular possession of Japan will be free of opium-smokers.<sup>28</sup>

Japan having set a good example, the United States of America followed it in the Philippines, with an energy which showed that the New World instinct, always strongly opposed to the foisting of opium on the East by the "civilizing" West, knew how to translate its theory into practice. At the recommendation of the Philippine Opium Commission, already referred to, the American Congress enacted, in March, 1905, the immediate prohibition of the sale and use of opium in the Philippines, except for medical purposes. The traffic in the drug was made a government monopoly; natives who violated any of the laws, regulations, or rules against the use of it, were to be severely punished with fines or imprisonment, or both, and to be disfranchised for repeated offense. The single exception made, referred to the Chinese population of about 70,000, who were allowed a period of three years to break with the habit. A law, adopted by the legislature of the Philippines, October 10, 1907, directed that the Chinese consumers should be registered, that nothing more than their accustomed daily dose of opium should be furnished to them, and that this dose should be reduced each month by 15 per cent., until it was entirely cut off.

<sup>28</sup> K. Midzuno, consul-general of Japan at New York, "Japan's Crusade on the Use of Opium in Formosa," in the *North-American Review*, February, 1910.

On March 1, 1908, the day on which prohibition became universal in the Philippine Islands, there remained only some two-hundred opium-smokers in a hospital at Manila and a few more in provincial hospitals.<sup>29</sup> Though the revenue derived from the sale of opium undoubtedly would be great, the United States of America, having become a colonial power, never hesitated to act upon the conviction that the ultimate loss in the character and energy of the people newly transferred to their care would many times counterbalance such an injurious profit.<sup>30</sup> Not satisfied with eradicating the evil in its own dependencies, the government of the United States went even a step beyond. The articles of the Second Peace Conference at the Hague providing for commissions of inquiry where points of difference arise among the powers, the administration at Washington informed the governments of the countries concerned that it desired to come to a decision as to whether the consequences of the opium trade and opium habit were not such that civilized powers should do what they could to put a stop to them.<sup>31</sup> The reception accorded to the American communication was the best evidence that in the council of nations a question had been broached which could no longer be ignored, and further proposals led to the participation, with the United States, of Great Britain, Germany, France, Russia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey, Persia, China, Japan, and Siam in the Opium Commission which met at Shanghai, February, 1909.

The proceedings were opened by the Viceroy of Nanking, His Excellency Tuang Fang, since promoted to be Viceroy of Chi-li, within whose jurisdiction Shanghai was then situated and who expressed his hope that a way might be found "to shorten the limit and bring about the abolition of opium at an early date." The Right Rev. Charles H. Brent, bishop of the Episcopal church in the Philippines, chief commissioner for the United States of America, hereupon being unanimously elected president, the commission began their work with examining the

<sup>29</sup> J. G. Alexander, *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> *Fifth Annual Report of the Philippine Commission*, 1904, Part II.

<sup>31</sup> *White Book*, "China," No. 1, 1908.

reports requested by the convening government from the other governments represented "on the various phases of the opium question in the territories and dependences of their respective countries." The report submitted by China found a severe critic in Sir Alexander Hosie, though in concluding his strictures he remarked: "There can be no doubt that fair progress has been made in several provinces. Much still remains to be done; but the Chinese government, whose sincerity is beyond question, have the sympathy of the British delegation, and, I trust, of the commission, in their efforts to eradicate the opium evil from the empire." Sir Alexander Hosie who, among the British delegates, represented the diplomatic service in China, could criticize from personal knowledge of the facts dealt with in the Chinese report, and it is a pity that the other reports, in the absence of equally competent critics, able to distinguish between facts and fancies in each of them severally, passed practically uncensured, notably the one submitted by the Dutch government, which painted the promoting of the opium habit to satisfy the exigencies of a ravenous exchequer in the light of most equitable and salutary colonial policy. Dr. Hamilton Wright, spokesman of the American delegation, concurring in Sir Alexander Hosie's language of sympathy for China's earnest endeavor and extending that sympathy to the financial difficulties connected with the opium question in all participating countries, maintained, nevertheless, that the opium trade, except for necessary uses, "ought not much longer to continue, or there will yet loom between the East and the West a problem that, in its magnitude and potentialities for strife, will outstrip the magnitude and forces of that long-since and happily settled slavery question." The American delegation, to relegate the use of opium to its proper sphere in relieving the really sick instead of its being made to pander to the vices of mankind, proposed seven resolutions: (1) that opium and its derivatives should be confined to legitimate medical use; (2) that no government should, as a matter of principle or necessity, continue to depend upon the production of opium and its derivatives; (3) that total prohibition of the manufacture, distribution, and use of smoking opium is the right principle to

be applied to all peoples; (4) that it is the duty of all opium-producing countries to prevent the shipment of opium to countries which prohibit its entry; (5) that strict international agreements are needed to control the trade in morphia; (6) that a concerted effort should be made by each government to assist every other in the solution of its internal opium problem; (7) that the commission record its sense in favor of an international conference for the solution of the opium problem in general.<sup>32</sup> In the discussion which followed, other resolutions were proposed by the other delegations, the two of Dutch origin meeting with the least success, especially the first which began by declaring that "the total eradication of the use of opium within a few years, is to be considered a high, but at present an unattainable ideal," a declaration of *non possumus* characteristic of the Dutch government, heedless of Formosa and the Philippines: Opium is in our colonies one of the principal sources of revenue; doing away with opium would seriously handicap our finances; *ergo*, the eradication of the opium evil is to be considered an unattainable ideal! Hence the passive resistance of the Dutch delegation against improvement, while the British delegation took a more candid stand in emasculating the American proposals by an opposition above board: "To be entirely frank," said Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, "the British delegation is not able to accept the view that opium should be confined simply and solely to medical needs." The first of the British resolutions, in response to the observation of Mr. T'ang Kuo-an, the leading Chinese delegate, that the sentiment of the Chinese people has been stirred as it has "never been stirred before during two thousand odd years of history," threw, however, a sop to sentiment at large, though the great object was frustrated, and became the introductory clause to the resolutions of the Shanghai Commission as finally adopted: (1) That the International Opium Commission recognizes the unswerving sincerity of the government of China in their efforts to eradicate the production and consumption of opium throughout the empire; the increasing

<sup>32</sup> *The Official Report of the Proceedings of the International Opium Commission.*

body of opinion among their own subjects by which those efforts are being supported; and the real, though unequal, progress already made in a task which is one of the greatest magnitude. (2) That in view of the action taken by the government of China in suppressing the practice of opium-smoking, and by other governments to the same end, the International Opium Commission recommends that each delegation concerned move its own government to take measures for the gradual suppression of the practice of opium-smoking in its own territories and possessions, with due regard to the varying circumstances of each country concerned. (3) That the International Opium Commission finds that the use of opium otherwise than for medical purposes is held by almost every participating country to be a matter for prohibition or for careful regulation; and that each country in the administration of its system of regulation purports to be aiming, as opportunity offers, at progressively increasing stringency. In recording these conclusions the International Opium Commission recognizes the wide variations between the conditions prevailing in the different countries, but it would urge on the attention of the governments concerned the desirability of re-examination of their systems of regulation in the light of the experience of other countries dealing with the same problem. (4) That the International Opium Commission finds that each government represented has strict laws which are aimed directly or indirectly to prevent the smuggling of opium, its alkaloids, derivatives, and preparations into their respective territories; in the judgment of the International Opium Commission it is also the duty of all countries to adopt reasonable means to prevent at ports of departure the shipment of opium, its alkaloids, derivatives, and preparations, to any country which prohibits the entry of any opium, its alkaloids, derivatives, and preparations. (5) That the International Opium Commission finds that the unrestricted manufacture, sale, and distribution of morphine already constitute a grave danger, and that the morphine habit shows signs of spreading: the International Opium Commission, therefore, desires to urge strongly on all governments that it is highly important that drastic measures should be taken by each

government in its own territories and possessions to control the manufacture, sale, and distribution of this drug, and also of such other derivatives of opium as may appear on scientific inquiry to be liable to similar abuse and productive of like ill effects. (6) That as the International Opium Commission is not constituted in such a manner as to permit the investigation from a scientific point of view of anti-opium remedies and of the properties and effects of opium and its products, but deems such investigation to be of the highest importance, the International Opium Commission desires that each delegation shall recommend this branch of the subject to its own government for such action as that government may think necessary. (7) That the International Opium Commission strongly urges all governments possessing concessions or settlements in China which have not yet taken effective action toward the closing of opium divans in the said concessions and settlements, to take steps to that end, as soon as they may deem it possible, on the lines already adopted by several governments. (8) That the International Opium Commission recommends strongly that each delegation move its government to enter into negotiations with the Chinese with a view to effective and prompt measures being taken in the various foreign concessions and settlements in China for the prohibition of the trade and manufacture of such anti-opium remedies as contain opium or its derivatives. (9) That the International Opium Commission recommends that each delegation move its government to apply its pharmacy laws to its subjects in the consular districts, concessions, and settlements in China.<sup>33</sup>

Where China looked for complete co-operation from all the civilized powers in her attempt to throttle the opium evil, as Mr. T'ang Kuo-an expressed it, open and secret obstruction prevented the American suggestions from being adopted to their full beneficial extent as a rule for future action. A section of the American press strictured especially the selfish conduct of the British delegation in face of the acknowledged *bona fides* of the Chinese government with its outspoken desire that Great

<sup>33</sup> *The Official Report of the Proceedings of the International Opium Commission.*



Britain should further reduce the already conceded period of ten years for the gradual cessation of the import of Indian opium into China. In connection with this, additional importance attaches to the statement of Colonel Seely, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, at the occasion of the Colonial Office debate, House of Commons, July 27, 1909: "We adhere to our view that it [the opium habit] is a bad thing for a race, and the more you can stop it the better for all concerned; . . . we will not cease to do our best to assist China to make what reduction she can, and to diminish, as far as possible, and as soon as possible, the consumption of opium in all places where the Colonial Office has rule."

Speaking of the difference in manner between British and Dutch opposition to the energetic mode of procedure suggested by America, the humorous side of the proceedings at Shanghai should not go unnoticed. The gay note was struck by the two resolutions of the Dutch delegation, whose acceptance would have been tantamount to the commission pronouncing the Dutch system of dealing with the opium trade as a model system to be copied by all other countries. The delegates of the other countries, however—*et pour cause!*—did not show the least disposition to endorse the good opinion which the Dutch delegates professed to entertain of the opium *régie* in the Dutch East Indies, and the motion was wisely shelved. As a matter of fact, the opium *régie* has brought there nothing of the good promised and all the evil predicted of it. To begin with, it undid the noble work of Robert Lieve Jasper Baron van der Capellen, the "Abolisher of opium in the Praenger Regencies" as the inscription on his gravestone in the churchyard of the village of Ellecom justly commemorates him. We have already mentioned the reopening of that territory, with Bantam, etc., to the poisonous drug, an act of dreadful weight, which, instead of tending to the eradication of the opium habit, establishes again, notwithstanding a noisy display of colonial ethics, the methods censured by Sir Stamford Raffles, when he took the reins of government in Java from those who, "overlooking every consideration of policy and humanity, [allowed] an addition to their finances to outweigh

all regard to the ultimate happiness of the country." The first resolution proposed by the Dutch delegation summarily dealt with, the second, concerning another "unattainable ideal," unattainable because not striven after, was also brushed aside by the commission. It expatiated upon opium-smuggling, to the tune of: Praise us according to our words, not according to our works! When the scandalous abuses of the opium farm made reform absolutely necessary, there could not be any doubt as to the efficiency of the opium *régie*, introduced for the ostensible purpose of clearing the atmosphere charged with bribery and corruption, or that success depended principally upon the power of government to contend against smuggling, without the assistance of the opium-farmers, henceforth neutral if not antagonistic, their capital, formerly invested in the licit, now wholly invested in the illicit, trade. And yet, the government opium police on land and sea remained utterly inadequate, a sham and a delusion, not a standing menace against the clandestine traffic, but a standing joke. A striking illustration of this ridiculous unfitness was furnished by the expressly created native corps of opium roughriders, who never got their horses: mounted opium-hunters on foot, with big cavalry boots they were not able to walk in, and big cavalry swords they were not trained to handle, but carried like cudgels over their shoulders. Meanwhile, opium follows the Dutch flag on all military expeditions to the exterior possessions, presented to the natives at the point of the bayonet, quite recently in Bali and elsewhere, not otherwise than a century ago on the west coast of Sumatra. We have to recognize, however, that the last speech from the Dutch throne pronounced by the Minister for the Interior at the opening of the States General, September 21, 1909, intimated a desire to check the abuse of opium in the Dutch East Indies, while the new Minister for the Colonies, in a memorandum on the Colonial Budget for 1910, declared himself in favor of an experiment with the licensing system. But no definite measures have been announced and experience teaches that there is a wide gulf between utterances in the Hague and deeds in the colonies. For the moral and physical condition of coming generations, suckled on opium, it must also

be considered of evil augury that the new governor-general of the Dutch East Indies, though in his parliamentary rhetoric an enemy of opium, during his first term of office as Minister for the Colonies, countenanced the propagation of the opium habit by the opening, under the *régie*, of vast areas to the drug, which under the farm had been closed.

Despite her indecision regarding improvement, the Shanghai Commission has settled two things once and for all: the unquestionably noxious character of the opium traffic and the absolute sincerity of the Chinese government.<sup>34</sup> Though it "is in straightened circumstances, it will neither seek to satisfy its hunger nor quench its thirst at the expense of this harmful poison, so that it may rid its people of this great bane."<sup>35</sup> Missionaries in the province of Yunnan, the second in importance of the opium-producing provinces, writes that the cultivation of the poppy is already practically at an end throughout its limits. Mr. Joshua Vale, of the China Inland Mission at Changtu, the capital of the great western province of Sze-chuan which, prior to the decree of 1906, produced far more opium than any other, states that proclamations have been issued to prohibit all poppy-planting this autumn, with threats of dire punishment to anyone who dares to disobey. Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, informs the House of Commons<sup>36</sup> that the reports recently received from the British consular officers in China, tend to show that the Chinese government are both energetic and sincere in their attempt to suppress the cultivation of the poppy in China. Total prohibition within a measurable time is undoubtedly the policy which finds favor at the moment.<sup>37</sup> It is not China which lags behind in honest endeavor, and an instructive parallel may be drawn between her and Holland, whose discrepancy between colonial theory at the Hague and colonial practice in her colonies we have just touched upon.

<sup>34</sup> Mr. Bennett in the House of Commons, Colonial Office debate, July 27, 1909.

<sup>35</sup> Chinese imperial decree of March 15, 1909.

<sup>36</sup> In answer to a question, September 7, 1909.

<sup>37</sup> Sir J. Jorden, British minister at Peking, in a letter, dated October 21, 1909.

In other parts of the world, including the European concessions and settlements in China, the opium question stands at this moment as follows: Consequent to the policy which aims at the extinction of the trade within ten years, the government of British India are steadily curtailing the manufacture of the drug.<sup>38</sup> The situation in Hongkong is that by the end of February, 1910, all the opium divans will be closed.<sup>39</sup> In most of the (other) European concessions in Chinese ports efforts have been made for the suppression of the opium dens.<sup>40</sup> When the Germans went to Shantung, some ten years ago, they found a large part of the province under opium-cultivation; they took the thing into their own hands and gradually reduced the opium revenue from about one-seventh of the total revenue until today it is only about 1 per cent.<sup>41</sup> Of the attitude of Japan, both at home and in Formosa, we have already spoken. In Siam, as in Japan, it has been found that the restriction of opium is of immense importance to the population;<sup>42</sup> the king of Siam has declared that measures will be taken for the administration of the opium monopoly with the object of lessening and eventually entirely suppressing the sale of the drug.<sup>43</sup> In Portuguese Macao and French Indo-China, beginnings are made, or at least promises given of legislation with the same object in view;<sup>44</sup> the governor-general of French Indo-China appointed a Commission with a view to the gradual suppression of the opium habit.<sup>45</sup> With regard to the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, the government is about to set up a state monopoly of opium.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Opium Administration Report* for the year ending October 30, 1908.

<sup>39</sup> Colonel Seely, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, replying in the House of Commons, Colonial Office debate, July 27, 1909.

<sup>40</sup> J. G. Alexander, *op. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> Mr. Laidlaw in the House of Commons, Colonial Office debate, July 27, 1909.

<sup>42</sup> Mr. Verney in the House of Commons, Colonial Office debate, July 27, 1909.

<sup>43</sup> Replying to an address of congratulation on the occasion of his birthday, September 24, 1908.

<sup>44</sup> J. G. Alexander, *Letter to the Foreign Ministers of the Countries Participating in the Shanghai Opium Commission*.

<sup>45</sup> *L'Europe*, September 27, 1907.

<sup>46</sup> Colonel Seely, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the House of Commons, July 27, 1909.

If the Straits Settlements still lag behind in the anti-opium movement, the enthusiasm in the Federated Malay States is described as "colossal." In Ceylon, the government has spontaneously recognized the necessity of taking measures to restrict the use of opium within the narrowest possible limits;<sup>47</sup> the commission on the question is still sitting in Ceylon, and the present policy, if continued, will lead to suppression.<sup>48</sup> All the self-governing British colonies which contain any considerable Chinese population, have adopted prohibition laws against the sale and use of opium, apart from medical requirements,<sup>49</sup> notwithstanding the considerable decrease in revenue such measures entail. The new government of Persia, emulous of China, has issued stringent regulations restricting the sale of opium, with a view to the ultimate suppression of smoking the drug, which is declared in a proclamation to be responsible for the backward condition of the country.<sup>50</sup>

Though these tidings spell reform, at least on the surface, in promises not always fulfilled and recommendations not always observed, room enough is left for concerted international action, provided the nations of the West are really minded to stamp out, anyway to limit the opium evil, which, if they did not create it directly, they did so much to foster from notions of sordid gain. This consideration apparently moved the government of the United States of America when instructing its delegates to Shanghai, whose last resolution, proposed but defeated, intended to make the commission "record its sense in favor of the principle of an international conference for the solution of the problem." Withdrawn for the moment, the idea has therefore not been given up, and Dr. Hamilton Wright, one of the American delegates to Shanghai, is stated to be engaged on the program for such a conference, whose object will be to arrive at final conclusions; an international conference, in fact, which will

<sup>47</sup> *White Book*, "Ceylon," 1908.

<sup>48</sup> Telegram, read by the Master of Elibank, Under-Secretary of State for India, to a deputation from the Edinburgh Committee for the Suppression of the Indo-Chinese Opium Traffic, December 17, 1909.

<sup>49</sup> J. G. Alexander, *op. cit.*

<sup>50</sup> Reuter telegram, dated Teheran, August 28, 1909.

embody rules, binding on the participating powers, for a positive warfare on opium as an agent of moral and physical degeneration. The new step taken at Washington is in perfect agreement with America's earliest and best traditions of oriental diplomacy. The convention would provide for the suppression of opium within a certain period and the interdiction of the drug as contraband, right of search to be granted to the signatory powers and illicit traffic to be considered an international offense. China has already signified her approbation: the Wai-Wu-Pu strongly favors the proposal, but the approval of its details by the boards of Finance and Internal Affairs is necessary for its formal acceptance.<sup>51</sup> If their protestations of disinterested philanthropy in their mission of civilization are to be taken seriously, the countries which participated in the Shanghai Commission must follow suit. The European nations having colonies or protectorates in the East, cannot evade the duty of keeping pace with China, to quote once more from Mr. Alexander's letter. One need not be an extremist, and may be fully aware of the difficulties involved in the suppression of the opium habit, to object that governments which boast of their paternal care for the primitive races they have subjected, put temptation in the way of unbridled, sometimes artificially depraved, appetites in order to swell their colonial revenues. The longer this abuse continues, the harder, also for financial reasons, the task of opposing it, and the sooner the hand is put to the plow of reform, the better both for rulers and peoples ruled. State monopoly seems a first requisite, with state control of the retail trade; but if the farming system is abandoned only to replace it by a *régie* which strives after propagation instead of suppression of the habit, as in the Dutch East Indies, the new offense will smell not less rank to heaven than the old. With medical treatment, registration of the opium-smokers must be introduced and enforced to limit their number, instead of stimulating the sale by enticing fresh victims to the government opium dens, those ante-chambers of hell, in native parlance, "where demons initiate their chosen into their most

<sup>51</sup> Telegram to the *New York World*, November 8, 1909, from its Peking correspondent.

vicious practice." The clandestine traffic must be stamped out by international arrangement of enduring efficacy; the actual amount of opium consumed in any given country is at present an unknown quantity: the late Mr. W. H. Read, consul-general for the Netherlands at Singapore, once told the writer of this article that e.g., from the Straits Settlements alone, according to trustworthy information, five times as much opium was shipped to Bali Boeleleng and other ports, to be smuggled into the Dutch East Indies, as the sum-total which figured in the government statistics as officially consumed. This was in the days of the opium farm, and with the opium *régie* the smugglers' opportunities have certainly not diminished, whatever the government statistics may show or hide in their elastic accommodation to government fads and fancies.

Above all, if the opium habit is to be eradicated, or even to be limited, the governments concerned will have to face resolutely the financial issue. Hesitation between the goat of reform and the cabbage of profit will continue to spoil the best intentions: *Qui enim vitiis modum apponit, is partem suscepit vitiorum*, or, as Sir Stamford Raffles formulated it, revenue derived from so impure a source debases the receiver as well as the opium-smoker he receives it from, degrading his character and enervating his energy. To what extent, has been well expressed by Pakoe Boewono II († 1749), emperor of Mantaram, who, in his great didactic poem, censures this phase of Western civilization, imposed upon the island of Java by the Dutch:

This is the path which leads to ruin,  
Which opens to him who enslaves himself to opium,  
  
From a man in good repute he becomes an outcast,  
His enterprises do not prosper and therefore he becomes a thief,  
  
And he is not only miserable in his body,  
But misery dwells in his heart,  
And misery continues from generation to generation.

NOTE.—Since writing the above, all the governments invited by the administration at Washington to participate in the Opium Conference at the Hague have accepted with the exception, so far, of those of Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. In answer to a question of Mr. Th. Taylor in the

House of Commons, March 10, 1910, whether, seeing that the production of opium in China is being largely restricted, the British government feel inclined to respond to the desire of the Chinese government to shorten the period of nearly eight years during which India is to continue to send opium to China, the Under-Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu, answered, in substance, that His Majesty's government is not disposed to disturb the settlement arrived at. Meanwhile, the last remaining opium divans in Hong Kong were closed on February 28. The colonial government of the Straits Settlements is putting itself in a position in which it will be able to exercise considerable control over the traffic in opium. The acting governor of Ceylon anticipated that, with a clause embodying provisions regarding the use of opium by the *vedaralas* (native medical practitioners), the amended Opium Ordinance, which was suspended last year, would be brought into force on July 1.—J. F. S.